



Institute for Workplace Development

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Building Inclusive Recruiting, Interviewing and Retention Strategies

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Overview of Today's Discussion

- Neurodiversity
 - Definition
 - Common symptoms
 - Strengths
- Workplace Accommodations
- Inclusive practices
 - Top leadership
 - Management
 - Co-workers

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity – differences in

- Thinking
- Processing
- Learning
- Behavior

Neurodiversity – commonly used to describe workplace diversity and inclusion focused on those who are neurodivergent.



Examples

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Inattentive type
 - Hyperactive type
 - Combined
- Dyslexia
- [Learn more about Neurodivergent & Neurodiversity: Meanings & Examples \(exceptionalindividuals.com\)](https://exceptionalindividuals.com)

Do you know someone who is neurodivergent?



Common Characteristics of Neurodivergent Population

Autism Spectrum Disorder



- Social-Emotional Reciprocity
- Nonverbal Communication
- Relationships
- Repetitive Behaviors
- Sensory sensitivities

Strengths of Individuals with Autism

- Attention to detail
- Deep focus
- Absorb and retain facts
- Visual skills
- Expertise
- Methodical approach



- Novel approaches
- Creativity
- Tenacity and resilience
- Accepting of differences
- Integrity
- Reliability

Source: Autism Awareness Centre

Individuals with ASD

Actors/Comedians

- Dan Aykroyd
- Jerry Seinfeld

Inventors/Scientists

- Charles Darwin
- Albert Einstein
- Nikola Tesla
- Sir Isaac Newton

Artists/Writers

- Emily Dickinson
- Andy Warhol
- William Butler Yeats
- Mozart

Entrepreneurs

- Bill Gates
- Steve Jobs

Dyslexia

- Language-based learning disorder
 - Includes poor
 - word reading
 - word decoding
 - oral reading fluency
 - spelling
- Struggle with organizational skills, planning and prioritizing, keeping time, concentrating with background noise



Source: Austin Learning Solutions

Strengths of People with Dyslexia



Source: Dyslexia Support South

- Good problem solvers
- Creative
- Improved pattern recognition
- Good spatial knowledge
- Sharper peripheral vision
- Business entrepreneurs
- Excellent big-picture thinkers
- Observant
- High levels of empathy

Individuals with Dyslexia

- Orlando Bloom
- Tom Cruise
- Leonardo di Vinci
- Walt Disney
- Jim Carey
- Albert Einstein
- Patrick Dempsey
- Picasso
- John F. Kennedy
- George Washington
- John Lennon
- Steven Spielberg
- Whoopi Goldberg
- Kiera Knightley
- Richard Branson
- Agatha Christie

ADHD/ADD

Executive
Function

Emotional
Regulation

Impulse
Control

Fine Motor
Skills

Strengths of Individuals with ADHD

- Generous and compassionate
- Creative
- Imaginative
- See situations from different perspectives
- Hyperfocus
- Resilience



Individuals with ADHD

- Howie Mandel
- Simone Biles
- Adam Levine
- Justin Timberlake
- Michael Phelps
- Terry Bradshaw
- Channing Tatum
- Emma Watson
- Albert Einstein
- Michael Jordan
- Richard Branson



Co-occurring (Comorbid) Conditions

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Learning disorders
- Sleep disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Body focused repetitive behaviors
- Rejection sensitive dysphoria
- Sensory processing disorder

Inclusive Work Environment

Benefits of Neurodiversity in the Workplace

- Enhances organizational culture and climate
- Fosters a sense of value among all employees
- Has a positive effect on the workplace and the customer
- Generates the inherent social benefits of creating and sustaining an inclusive workplace



Source: Meristem Transformative Autism Program (TAP)

Job Posting

- Include clear instructions on how candidates can request an accommodation
- Use clear, plain language and remove jargon
- Only list basic requirements that are absolutely needed for the job
- Include company's support for employees, its values, and professional development opportunities
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Employee benefits (flexible working policy, tuition reimbursement)
 - Disability employee resource group

[Source: How to Optimize Job Descriptions for Neurodivergent Job Seekers \(shrm.org\)](https://shrm.org)

Top Leadership

- Show support for recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining individuals with disabilities
 - Diversity statement
 - ERG
 - Targeted recruiting
 - Partnerships
- Ensure language that is spoken and written is inclusive and respectful
- Have policies and procedures in place that encourage inclusivity
 - Anti-harassment policy
 - Accommodation procedures
- Find and develop champions

Recruiting Resources

- VocRehab+ by DirectEmployers
- [Transformative Autism Program - Employer Registration](#)
- [PathPoint](#)
- [Potentia Workforce - Neurodiversity Employment Services](#)
- Autism @ Work www.disabilityin.org
- Autism Society www.autism-society.org
- Advertise through targeted publications such as [ADDitude Magazine](#)
- Disability resource centers at local colleges
- Hire Autism www.hireautism.org

Hiring Managers

- Considerations for the application process
 - Accommodations
 - Explanation of hiring process
- Considerations for interview process
 - Number of interviewers
 - Interview questions in advance
 - [AskEARN | Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- Assessing the job candidate
 - Focus on ability to do the job with or without an accommodation
- Job offer
 - Set clear expectations

Onboarding and Retention

- First day checklist
 - When to report to work
 - Breaks/lunch
 - Who to report to
 - What to expect
- Progress through probationary period
 - Positive feedback
 - Constructive criticism
- Training
- Performance coaching



Supporting Co-workers

- Interactions
- Documents
 - Easy to read fonts
 - Avoid red and green
 - Include visual elements when presenting data with numbers
 - Record meetings
- Work meetings/projects
 - Face-to-face
 - Online
- Outings
 - Celebrations
 - Lunch/dinner



Celebrating

- Autism Awareness Month (April)
- ADHD Awareness Month (October)
- Dyslexia Awareness Month (October)



[World Autism Month | Autism Speaks](#)



AWARENESS IS KEY!

[ADHDAwarenessMonth 2024](#)



[International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](https://dyslexiaida.org)

Tools and Resources

Tools for Success

- Online calendars
- Planners
- Smartphone apps
- Clock at desk/timer
- Fidget tools
- Noise cancelling headset
- Breaks
- Weighted blanket/vest
- Note taker / proofreader



Smartphone Apps

Organization and collaboration: [Asana](#)

Symptom tracker, daily mood tracker, journal, appointment calendar, daily dose of inspiration, task challenger, videos, self-care and social contact trackers: [ADDA Health Storylines](#)

Enables you to complete a hardcopy worksheet on your tablet or phone. Designed for pupils and students who struggle with handwriting: [SnapTypePro](#)

Anxiety app for breathing techniques: [Breathwrk](#)

Mood tracker and self-care tracker [Daylio](#)

Anxiety app game: [AntiStress Anxiety Relief Game](#)



Keep Track of Tasks: [FocusKeeper](#) and [Finish](#)

Motivate yourself to achieve goals: [Habitca](#)

Checklist, organizer, calendar, reminder, habit forming app: [Todoist](#)

Taking and organizing notes: [Evernote](#)

Lets you speak text out loud and change text appearance to help with reading: [ClaroSpeak](#)

Anxiety app for meditation: [Calm](#)

Text-to-speech reader that allows you to upload text and documents: [NaturalReader](#)

Transformative Autism Program

- Meristem – program in California dedicated to preparing young adults on the autism spectrum
- Assist organizations with placing students and graduates into jobs
- Offer employers training at no cost – Breaking Workforce Barriers
- Contact: Eric Steward, TAP Director; eric@meristem.pro or 916-671-2141
- For more information, visit www.tapautism.org

Resources – Autism and Dyslexia

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN): [Neurodiversity in the Workplace Toolkit](#)
- Job Accommodation Network: [Autism Spectrum](#)
- [Autism Speaks](#)
- Job Accommodation Network: [Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia](#)
- [Dyslexia Foundation](#)
- [International Dyslexia Association](#)
- [Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy Resources Related to Autism](#)

Resources - ADHD

- Job Accommodation Network: [ADHD](#)
- [ADDitude Magazine](#)
- [Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#)
- [Children and Adults with ADHD \(CHADD\)](#)
- [Understood](#)
- [Mind Coach NOLA](#) – for Turbo Thinkers

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Thank you!

Questions??

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